

Draft

Rockville Environment Commission Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday, October 6, 2016

Diamondback Terrapin, City Hall,
111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland

Attendance

Commissioners Present: Chair John Becker, Steve Cardon, Alicia Hosmer (via phone), Lea Rosenbohm, Steve Sprague, Helen Triolo and Fedon Vayanis.

Commissioners Absent: Amanda Aparicio, Clark Reed

Council Liaison: Mark Pierzchala (absent)

City Staff: Erica Shingara

Guests: Liz Lee from Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN), Hannah Byun, Amanda Dewey.

Meeting Commencement and Introductions

The meeting convened at 7:01 pm by Chair Becker and guests were introduced.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Rosenbohm moved and Commissioner Sprague seconded a motion to approve the September 6, 2016 minutes. The motion passed (5-0-1). Commissioners Triolo abstained due to absence from the September meeting.

Hydraulic Fracturing in Maryland

- Chair Becker summarized the history of the Commission's review of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) in Maryland. The Sustainability Committee received a CCAN presentation in August and recommended that the Commission receive the presentation in September. Given the experiences of other states that have allowed this practice, he expressed concern over the potential long term effects of hydraulic fracturing and questioned whether regulations could protect the environment and public health from adverse impacts.
- Erica Shingara noted two updates since the Commission's last meeting:
 - At the September 19th Mayor and Council meeting, the Mayor and Council requested the Environment Commission review the fracking issue. At this meeting, Councilmember Pierzchala requested that this review be based on solid research, provide a nexus to Rockville, and if possible, be in a format of a position on a piece of state regulation or legislation.
 - On September 25, 2016, the Maryland Department of the Environment released [draft Oil and Gas Exploration and Production Regulations and draft Underground Injection Control Regulations](#) to govern the exploration and production of oil and gas and to address technologies that were not typically employed in Maryland when the existing regulations were adopted (such as hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling). It is anticipated that the draft regulations will be published in the Maryland Register on November 14th. The regulations will have a 30-day public comment period which is anticipated to end on December 14, 2016 (actual dates to be determined).

- The Commission discussed the new draft regulations, the potential impacts of fracking on Rockville and Maryland, and options for Commission action. Certain changes between the draft 2015 and 2016 regulations were noted. The regulations appear to be more stringent in some instances (well casing and cementing requirements; setbacks required between fracking operations and the surface water intakes for public drinking water sources) than regulations proposed in 2015 and less stringent in other cases (setbacks between fracking operations and buildings; methods that would be used to monitor air quality; and the process that would be used to review fracking permit applications). The draft regulations include location restrictions for activities in Garrett County and Allegany County and the Department may impose additional restrictions to protect other watersheds. The Commission noted that while fracking in Rockville and Montgomery County is effectively banned through zoning, there were concerns about potential adverse effects to air and water quality that upstream/upwind operations in western Maryland could have downstream/downwind in Rockville; especially in the Potomac River which serves as the source for Rockville's drinking water. Several Commissioners noted that it could not be concluded that the draft regulations were sufficient to protect human health and the environment.
- The Commission focused discussion on the environment but noted that there are other factors for consideration, such as jobs, energy costs, political, and economic impacts. For example, natural gas serves as an energy source for heating, cooking and electricity generation for Rockville's residents, businesses and municipal facilities and operations. The City has more than 27 accounts for natural gas and budgeted \$259 thousand for heating fuel (natural gas and oil) in FY17.
- Commissioner Rosenbohm moved and Commissioner Cardon seconded a motion to create a position paper to the Mayor and Council on the potential direct and indirect impacts of hydraulic fracturing on Rockville. The Commission discussed the potential concerns (water and air pollution), potential sources of scientific data, and the timing for the paper to correspond to MDE's public process, other State initiatives, and local meetings. The motioned passed (6-1-0).
 - **Action Item:** Commissioner Rosenbohm and Commissioner Cardon volunteered to draft the position paper and email it the Commission by October 24 for review and comment.
 - **Action Item:** Commissioners will submit comments to revise the draft in anticipation of discussion and approval at the November 4th meeting.

General Updates

Chair Becker circulated drafts of a Commission workplan, schedule, and webpage. These items were developed to coordinate with the City's fiscal year (July 1 through June 30th) and highlight the Commission's annual activities. He also noted that each committee should review their workplans and submit budget requests for FY17.

- **Action Item:** Commissioners will review the draft workplan, schedule, and budget and submit comments and questions to Chair Becker one week prior to the November meeting.

The Watershed Committee requested approval to purchase supplies for the October stream cleanup. Commissioner Rosenbohm moved Commissioner Sprague seconded the expenditure of \$100 to purchase trash grabbers for the stream cleanup. The motioned passed (6-0).

- **Action Item:** Erica Shingara will coordinate the purchase and delivery of the supplies for stream cleanup.

Committee Reports:

- ***Composting and Recycling:*** Chair Becker reported that there was a joint meeting of the Composting and Recycling and Watershed Committees to discuss composting. A representative from the Composting Crew attended the meeting to describe a pilot voluntarily household organic waste collection service in Chevy Chase. Both Committees were interested in a compost collection service, but questioned what would be financially feasible for Rockville. Commissioner Cardon noted that the Watershed Committee discussed whether another alternative, similar to the Rainscapes Rebate program, could be feasible for encouraging composting or whether a City facility could host a food waste drop off area that was serviced by a commercial compost collector. Erica Shingara reported that Montgomery County Bill 28-16 Solid Waste- Strategic Plan to Advance Composting is scheduled for T&E discussion on 10/27. According to an update at the County's Solid Waste Advisory Committee, there is currently an RFP for a processing facility to accept organics from Montgomery County. The County may further explore composting of commercial generated organics.
- ***Energy Committee:*** Commissioner Triolo reported that the Committee did not meet in September. The Montgomery County Solar Co-op closed on September 30th with approximately 237 interested members. Approximately 22 of the 80 contracts signed to date have a Rockville address.
- ***Sustainability:*** Commissioner Hosmer reported that the Committee explored options to celebrate Community Wildlife Habitat certification. They recommended hosting a celebration event in the Mayor and Council Chambers with attendance from National Wildlife Federation (NWF), CWH participants and interested new members, the Mayor and Council, and Rainscapes Rewards. She is checking to see if the NWF can email program participants an invitation on Rockville's behalf and request photos of yards for a presentation. The Commission expressed interest in the celebration, but questioned whether it should be a potluck or light refreshments provided by the Commission.
 - ***Action Item:*** Erica Shingara will check on the availability of the Mayor and Council Chambers (preferably November 15 or 17) and forward information to Alicia Hosmer to check on availability of the NWF, Anne Goodman and a representative from Rainscapes Rewards.
- ***Watershed Protection:*** Commissioner Cardon noted that the volunteer stream cleanup will be held on October 22 from 10 a.m. until noon at Maryvale. Volunteers from the Commission and committees are encouraged to attend. They will send out a reminder and directions prior to the event.

Environment Management Division Update

Erica Shingara reviewed upcoming reminders, events and news:

- A training for Commissioners on the Maryland Open Meetings Act will be available. Additional information is available at:
www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/OpenGov/Openmeetings/default.aspx
- FY 2018 budget: There is an online opportunity to submit ideas for FY 2018 budget at www.rockvillemd.gov/index.aspx?NID=951 and the Mayor and Council will host a public hearing on November 1 to get early public input on next year's budget.
- As part of National Energy Action Month, several education events will be held:
 - October 19 – Volunteers from the local branch of the US Green Building Council will host an Energy Exploration education event for elementary school students in

the after-school program at Lincoln Park Community Center. Students will participate in hand-on arcade games that highlight energy at home (e.g., appliances, weatherization, lighting, water conservation, and heating and cooling).

- October 30 – Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection will host a free Energy Exploration education event at the Rockville Library (<https://mygreenmontgomery.org/explore/>)
- Upcoming environmental initiatives that may involve the Environment Commission within the next year include: the new NPDES permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment; a draft sustainable fleet policy; stakeholder input on a Climate Action Plan (EMD is working with a group of University of Maryland University College graduate students to draft a Climate Action Plan); coordination with Montgomery County on residential energy programs; and a green streets study.

New Business

- Commissioner Sprague inquired about a circulator bus service in Rockville. Erica Shingara reported that the Traffic and Transportation Division is drafting a scope of work for a circulator feasibility study that will be brought back to the Mayor and Council for review and guidance. The Commission inquired about the costs and expressed interest in learning more about the scope of the study.
- Chair Becker inquired about the status of the Forest and Tree Protection Ordinance (FTPO), Montgomery County Public Schools bus depot, Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) update, and attendance at the Volunteer Appreciation Event. He also reported that he emailed community members that signed the expression of interest form from Hometown Holidays, but has not received responses.
 - **Action Item:** Each committee will review the CMP public forum policy statements from the environment section (pages 9-12) and submit any comments prior to the November 2016 meeting (<http://rockvillemd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16591>).
 - **Action Item:** Updates on the FTPO, bus depot and CMP will be included in the November meeting.
- Commissioner Vayanis reported that the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services provides a home fire safety check with the opportunity to install a new smoke alarm free of charge. Appointments can be made online (www.weblinks2z.com/mcfrs/firesafety/default.aspx).

Adjourn

The Commission adjourned by acclamation at 8:55 p.m.

Next Commission Meeting

The Commission will tentatively meet on **Thursday, November 4, 2016 at 7:00 pm in the Diamondback Terrapin Conference Room at the Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville Maryland 20850-2321.** The public is invited to attend.